

A Captain In the Ranks

By...
**GEORGE
CARY
EGGLESTON**

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CHAPTER I.

THE slender remnant of Lee's artillery swung slowly into position a few miles west of Appomattox Court House. Wearily, but with spirit still, the batteries parked their guns in a field facing a strip of woodland. The guns were few in number now, but they were all that were left of those that had done battle on a score of historic fields.

Lee had been forced out of his works at Richmond and Petersburg a week before. Ever since, with that calm courage which had sustained him throughout the later and losing years of the war, he had struggled and battled to an effort to retreat to the Roanoke river. He had hoped there to unite the remnant of his army with what was left of Johnston's force and to make there a final and desperate stand.

In this purpose he had been baffled. Grant's forces were on his southern flank, and they had steadily pressed him back toward the James river on the north. In that direction there was no thoroughfare for him. Neither was there now in any other. Continual battling had depleted his army until it numbered now scarcely more than 10,000 men all told, and starvation had weakened these so greatly that only the heroism of despair enabled them to fight or to march at all.

The artillery that was parked out there in front of Appomattox Court House was only a feeble remnant of that which had fought so long and so determinedly. Gun after gun had been captured. Gun after gun had been dismounted in battle struggle. Cannon after cannon had been blown up by the explosion of shells striking them.

Captain Guilford Duncan, at the head of eleven mounted men, armed only with swords and pistols, paused before entering the woodlands in front. He looked about in every direction, and, with an eye educated by long experience in war, he observed the absence of infantry support.

He turned to Sergeant Garrett, who rode by his side, and said sadly: "Garrett, this means surrender. General Lee has put his artillery here to be captured. The end has come."

Then, dismounting, he wearily threw himself upon the ground, chewed and swallowed a few grains of corn—the only rations he had—and sought a brief respite of sleep. But before closing his eyes he turned to Garrett and gave the command:

"Post a sentinel and order him to wake us when Sheridan comes."

In a minute the captain was asleep. So were all his men except the sentinel posted to do the necessary waking.

That came all too quickly, for at this juncture in the final proceedings of the war Sheridan was vigorously carrying out Grant's laconic instruction to "press things." When the sentinel waked the captain, Sheridan's lines were less than fifty yards in front and were pouring heavy volleys into the unsupported Confederate artillery park.

Guilford Duncan and his men were moved to no excitement by this situation. Their nerves had been schooled to steadiness and their minds to calm under any conceivable circumstances by four years of vastly varied fighting. Without the slightest hurry they mounted their horses in obedience to Duncan's brief command. He led them at once into the presence of Colonel Cabell, whose battalion of artillery lay nearest to him. As they sat upon their horses in the leaden hallstern with countenances as calm as if they had been entering a drawing room Duncan touched his cap to Colonel Cabell and said:

"Colonel, I am under nobody's orders here. I have eleven men with me, all of them, as you know, as good artillerymen as there are in the army. Can you let us handle some guns for you?"

"No," answered Colonel Cabell. "I have lost so many guns already that I have twenty men to each piece." Then, after a moment's pause, he added:

"You, captain, cannot fail to understand what all this means."

"I quite understand that, colonel," answered Duncan, "but as I was in it at the beginning of this war, I have a strong desire to be in it at the end of it."

The colonel's cannon were firing vigorously by this time at the rate of six or eight shots to the minute from each gun, but he calmly looked over the little party on horseback and responded:

"You have some good horses, and this is April. You will need your horses in your farming operations. You had better take them and your men out of here. You can do no good by staying. This fight is a formality pure and simple, a preliminary to the final surrender."

"Then you order me to withdraw?" asked Duncan.

"Yes, certainly, and peremptorily if you wish, though you are not under my command," answered Colonel Cabell. "It is the best thing you can do for yourself, for your men, for your horses and for the country."

Duncan immediately obeyed the order, in a degree at least. He promptly

withdrew his men to the top of a little hillock in the rear and there watched the progress of the final fight. His nerves were all a-quiver. He was a young man, twenty-five years old perhaps, full of vigor, full of enthusiasm, full of fight. He was a trifle less than six feet high, with a lithe and symmetrical body, lean almost to emaciation by reason of arduous service and long starvation. He had a head that instantly attracted attention by its unusual size and its statuesque shape. He was bronzed almost to the complexion of a mulatto, but without any touch of yellow in the bronze. He was dark by nature, of intensely nervous temperament and obviously a man capable of enormous determination and unflinching endurance.

He had not yet lost the instinct of battle, and it galled him that he must sit idly there on his horse, with his men awaiting his orders, simply observing a fight in which he strongly desired to participate. He could see the Federal lines gradually closing in upon both flanks of the artillery, with the certainty that they must presently envelop and capture it. Seasoned soldier that he was, he could not endure the thought of standing still while such a work of war was going on.

Seeing the situation, he turned to his men, who were armed only with swords and pistols, and in a voice so calm that it belied his impulse he said to them:

"This is our last chance for a fight, boys. I am going into the middle of that mix. Anybody who chooses to follow me can come along."

Every man in that little company of eleven had two pistols in his saddle holsters and two upon his hips, and every man carried in addition a heavy cavalry sabre capable of doing execution at close quarters. They were gentlemen soldiers, all. The cause for which they had battled for four long years was as dear to them now as it ever had been. More important still, their courage was as unflinching in this climax and catastrophe of the war they had waged as it had been at Bull Run in the beginning of that struggle or in the Seven Days' fight or at Fredericksburg or Chancellorsville or Gettysburg or Cold Harbor. Duncan had not doubted their response for one moment, and he was not disappointed in the vigor with which they followed him as he led them into this final fight. As they dashed forward their advance was quickly discovered by the alert enemy, and a destructive fire of carbines was opened upon them. At that moment they were at the trot. Instantly Duncan gave the commands: "Gallop! Charge!"

With that demoniacal huntsman's cry which is known in history as the "rebel yell," the little squad dashed forward and plunged into the far heavier lines



"Gallop! Charge!"

of the enemy. There was a detached Federal gun there doing its work. It was a superb twelve pounder, and Duncan's men quickly captured it with its limber chest. Instantly dismounting and without waiting for orders from him, they turned it upon the enemy with vigorous effect, but they were so fearfully overmatched in numbers that their work endured for scarcely more than a minute. They fired a dozen shots perhaps, but they were speedily overwhelmed, and in another instant Duncan ordered them to mount and retire again, firing Partisan shots from their pistols as they went.

When he again reached the little hill to which he had retired at the beginning of the action, Duncan looked around him and saw that only seven of his eleven men remained. The other four had paid a final tribute of their lives to what was now obviously "the lost cause."

By this time the fight was over, and practically all that remained of the artillery of the Army of Northern Virginia was in possession of the enemy.

But that enemy was a generous one, and, foreseeing, as he did, the surrender that must come with the morning, it made no assault upon this wandering squad of brave but beaten men, who were sadly looking upon the disastrous end of the greatest war in human history.

Captain Duncan's party was on a

bald hill within easy range of the carbines of Sheridan's men, but not a shot was fired at them, and not so much as a squad was sent out to demand their surrender.

Night was now near at hand, and Guilford Duncan turned to his men and said:

"The war is practically over, I suppose, but I for one intend to stick to the game as long as it lasts. General Lee will surrender his army tonight or tomorrow morning, but General Johnston still has an army in the field in North Carolina. It is barely possible that we may get to him. It is my purpose to try. How many of you want to go with me?"

The response was instantaneous and unanimous.

"We'll all stick by you, captain, 'till the cows come home," they cried. "Very well," he answered. "We must march to James river tonight and cross it. We must make our way into the mountains and through Lynchburg, if possible, into North Carolina. We'll try, anyhow."

All night long they marched. They secured some coarse foodstuffs at a mill which they passed on their way up into the mountains. There for a week they struggled to make their way southward, fighting now and then, not with Federal troops, for there were none there, but with marauders. These were the offscourings of both armies and of the negro population of that region. They made themselves the pests of Virginia at that time. Their little bands consisted of deserters from both armies, dissolute negroes and all other kinds of "fellow fellows of the baser sort." They raided plantations; they stole horses; they terrorized women; they were a thorn in the flesh of General Grant's officers who were placed in strategic positions to prevent the possible occurrence of a guerrilla warfare and who therefore could not scatter their forces for the policing of a land left desolate and absolutely lawless.

During the sojourn in the mountains, in his effort to push his way through to Johnston, Guilford Duncan came upon a plantation where only women were living in the mansion house. A company of marauders had taken possession of the plantation, occupying its negro cabins and terrorizing the population of the place. When Duncan rode up with his seven armed men he instantly took command and assumed the role of protector. First of all he posted his men as sentries for the protection of the plantation homestead. Next he sent out scouts, including a number of trusty negroes who belonged upon the plantation, to find out where the marauders were located, and what their numbers were, and what purpose they might seem bent upon. From the reports of these scouts he learned that the marauders exceeded him in force by three to one or more, but that fact in no way appalled him. During a long experience in war he had learned well the lesson that numbers count for less than morale and that with skill and resoluteness a small force may easily overcome and destroy a larger one.

Duncan sent at once for the best negroes on the plantation—the negroes who had proved themselves loyal in their affection for their mistresses throughout the war. Having assembled these, he inquired of the women what arms and ammunition they had. There were the usual number of shot-guns belonging to a plantation and a considerable supply of powder and buckshot. Duncan assembled the negroes in the great hall of the plantation house and said to them:

"I have seven men here, all armed and all fighters. I have arms enough for you boys if you are willing to join me in the defense of the ladies on this plantation against about the worst set of scoundrels that ever lived on earth."

Johnny, the head dining room servant, speaking for all the rest, replied: "In co'se we is. Jest you lead us, mahstah, and you'll see how we'll do de wuk."

The marauders had established themselves in four or five of the negro quarters on the plantation, and in a certain sense they were strongly fortified. That is to say, they were housed in cabins built of logs too thick for any bullet to penetrate them. Four of these cabins were so placed that a fire from the door and the windows of either of them would completely command the entrance of each of the others. But to offset that, and to offset also the superiority of numbers which the marauders enjoyed, Guilford Duncan decided upon an attack by night. He knew he was outnumbered by two or three to one, even if he counted the willing but untrained negroes whom he had enlisted in his service. But he did not despair of success. It was his purpose to dislodge the marauders in a night attack, when he knew that they could not see to shoot with effect. He knew also that "he is three armed who knows his quarrel just."

Cautioning his men to maintain silence and to advance as quickly as possible, he got them into position and suddenly rushed upon the first of the four or five negro quarters. Knowing that the door of this house would be barricaded, he had instructed some of the negroes to bring a pole with them which might be used as a battering ram. With a rush, but without any burrah, for Duncan had ordered quiet as a part of his plan of campaign, the negroes carried the great pole forward and instantly crashed in the door. Within ten seconds afterward Duncan's ex-Confederate soldiers, with their pistols in use, were within the house, and the company of marauders there surrendered—those of them who had not fallen before the pistol shots. This first flush of victory encouraged the negroes under his command so far that what had been their enthusiasm became a positive battle madness. Without waiting for orders from him

they rushed with their battering ram upon the other houses occupied by the marauders, as did also his men, who were not accustomed to follow, but rather to lead, and within a few minutes all of those negro huts were in his possession, and all their occupants were in effect his prisoners.

At this moment Guilford Duncan, who had now no legal or military authority over his men, lost control of them. Both the negroes and the white men seemed to go mad. They recognized in the marauders no rights of a military kind, no title to be regarded as fighting men and no conceivable claim upon their conquerors' consideration. Both the negroes and the white men were merciless in their slaughter of the marauding highwaymen. Once, in the melee, Guilford Duncan endeavored to check their enthusiasm as a barbarity, but his men responded in quick, bullet-like words, indicating their idea that these men were not soldiers entitled to be taken prisoners, but were beasts of prey, rattlesnakes, mad dogs, enemies of the human race, whose extermination it was the duty of every honest man to seek and to accomplish as quickly as possible.

The contest lasted for a very brief while. The number of the slaughtered in proportion to the total number of men engaged was appalling. But this was not all. To it was immediately added the hasty hanging of men to the nearest trees, and Guilford Duncan was powerless to prevent that. The negroes, loyal to the mistresses whom they had served from infancy, had gone wild in their enthusiasm of defense. They ran amuck, and when the morning came there was not one man of all those marauders left alive to tell the story of the conflict.

In the meanwhile Guilford Duncan, by means of his men, had gathered information in every direction. He knew now that all hope was gone of his joining Johnston's army, even if that army had not surrendered, as by this time it probably had done. He therefore brought his men together. Most of them lived in those mountains round about or in the lower country east of them, so he said to them:

"Men, the war is over. Most of you, as I understand it, live somewhere near here or within fifty miles of here. As the last order that I shall ever issue to you as a captain, I direct you now to return to your homes at once. My advice to you is to go to work and rebuild your fortunes as best you can. We've had our last fight. We must now do the best that we can for ourselves under extremely adverse circumstances. Go home, cultivate your fields, take care of your families and be as good citizens in peace as you have been good soldiers in war."

There was a hurried consultation among the men. Presently Sergeant Garrett spoke for the rest and said: "We will not go home, Captain Duncan, until each one of us has written orders from you to do so. Some of us fellows have children in our homes, and the rest of us may have children hereafter. We want them to know, as the years go by, that we did not desert our cause even in its dying hours; that we did not quit the army until we were ordered to quit. We ask of you, for each of us, a written order to go home or to go wherever else you may order us to go."

The captain fully understood the lov-

erty or feeling which underlay this request, and he promptly responded to it. Taking from his pocket a number of old letters and envelopes, he searched out whatever scraps there might be of blank paper. Upon these scraps he issued to each man of his little company a peremptory order to return to his home, with an added statement in the case of each that he had "served loyally, bravely and well even unto the end."

That night, before their final parting, the little company slept together in the midst of a cluster of pine trees with only one sentry on duty.

The next day came the parting. The captain, with tears dimming his vision, shook hands with each of his men in turn, saying to each, with choking utterance: "Goodby! God bless you!"

Then the spokesman of the men, Sergeant Garrett, asked: "Are you going home, Captain Duncan?"

For twenty seconds the young captain stared at his men, making no answer. Then, mastering himself and speaking as one dazed, he replied: "Home? Home? On all God's earth I have no home!"

Instantly he put spurs to his horse, half unconsciously turning toward the sunset.

A moment later he vanished from view over the crest of a hill.

(To be continued next Sunday)

Trinidad's Asphalt Lake.

The famous asphalt lake of Trinidad looks like a great black swamp surrounded with a fringe of coconut palms. A little railway runs across it, and men stand in it working, some on asphalt firm enough to support them, some on asphalt in which they keep sinking down an inch or two a minute, some on asphalt so soft it is like quicksand. The stuff looks like a cross between black mud and pitch. The lake is 110 acres in size, and its depth is tremendous. The thick asphalt, mixed with water, moves a little, and now and then an old tree comes slowly up from the depths. The men work with pickaxes, digging out the asphalt in lumps the size of pumpkins.

Ropemaking 2,000 Years B. C.

The name of the first ropemaker and that of the land in which he practiced his art have both been lost to history. Before the beginning of the historical period considerable skill had been acquired in that line. Egyptian sculptures prove that the art was practiced at least 2,000 years before the time of Christ.

Worse Than Broken.

The American Tourist—I suppose I speak broken French, eh, Henri? The waiter—Not exactly, m'sieur. You haf a word describes it better—let me see—ah, yes—it is pulverized.—Puck.

The Mean Man.

The late Max O'Rell gave this advice to bachelors: "Marry a woman smaller than yourself." Many a man couldn't find one.—Milwaukee Journal.

Feminine Esteem.

When women like each other, they kiss; when they love, they do one another's hair.—Lady Evans in London Mail.

SHIRT WAIST NEWS.

Tailor Made Effects in Fine Linen Belts and Stocks.

The sartorial question uppermost in the minds of many women is how to make the spring and summer shirt waists. For the benefit of those wrestling with this puzzling problem some ideas gleaned from a smart maker of these indispensable articles of the up-to-date woman's wardrobe may be found helpful.

He was most emphatic in declaring that the tailor made waist of fine though not sheer linen will be built on the lines of a man's negligee shirt. Fine tucks will run from neck to waist, with a single box plait down the center, fastened with medium sized pearl buttons. The moderate sleeves are finished with narrow rounded cuffs made for links.

With these shirts are worn a turn-down embroidered linen collar and a



AN EVENING BLOUSE.

tiny silk tie. So small is this tie that it takes some experience to get it into proper form. And a word as to belts worn with the stiff shirt waists. The linen varieties, both plain and embroidered, will be seen, but the newest belts are made of elastic silk webbing—the old fashioned kind that belted of long ago wound around their hour-glass waists.

The lingerie blouses, instead of the flat trimmings we have been wearing so long, show stunning little bolero jacket effects, formed with rows of narrow lace. In one advanced model two wide embroidered ruffles go from the waist over the shoulders, betwixt fashion, giving a broad effect, which is very desirable for a thin person.

The evening blouse illustrated is a charming little model carried out with rows of German val lace. Under the edge of each ruffle is a line of pale blue velvet ribbon. The girle is of blue velvet, one end draped up on the décolletage and finishing with a smart bow drawn through a rhinestone buckle. A spray of pale pink chiffon roses is an exquisite touch on one shoulder.

The movement for a "2-cent world postage" has failed. The world must have suspected it was a Yankee trick of some kind.

Has Been Tried and Found All Right

GOVERNOR

GEO. E. CHAMBERLAIN

OF OREGON

Say, you who have a true wife, looking after your welfare would you change, and take another, just because she belongs to the same dancing class party that you do?

OF COURSE YOU WOULDN'T NOT IF YOU ARE A REAL MAN.



Or, if you had an honest faithful bookkeeper, would you fire him to have one untried and almost unknown, just because the new man belonged to the same party as you did. OF COURSE YOU WOULDN'T NOT IF YOU ARE A REAL MAN.

VOTE FOR

Governor Geo. E. Chamberlain

THE IDOL OF THE PLAIN PEOPLE

Never Swap Horses While Crossing a Stream—Abraham Lincoln.
Don't Displace a True and Tried Servant for One Untried.—The People.
When You Go to the Voting Booth Think of the State Not of the Party.